



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT
Directorate E - Implementation & Support to Member States
ENV.E.4 - Compliance & Better Regulation

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ENV.E.4/DF/kn

Mr Alvaro MERINO
Calle Ricardo Ortiz, 61- 1 B
E- 28017 MADRID

**Subject: Your application for access to documents – Reference in GestDem
No 2019/1680**

Dear Mr Merino,

I refer to your e-mail dated 14 March 2019 in which you make a request for access to documents, registered on 20 March 2019 under the above-mentioned reference number. You asked ‘a list of all lobby meetings held by the Commissioner in charge of Environment, Karmenu Vella, or any other member of his Cabinet with any organisations representing churches and/or religious communities since 2014 onward’.

I would like to point out that Commissioner Vella took his functions on 1st November 2014. Therefore, the search was carried out since this date.

The following meetings complying with your application were identified:

- According to an invitation of the Minister of the Environment of Luxembourg (country holding the rotating presidency of the EU Council) and the Minister of the Environment of Italy, the 28 Ministers of Environment and Climate of the European Union (EU), Commissioner Vella and Commissioner Arias Canete met the Pope Francis on 16 September 2015 in Vatican City; the main objective of this meeting was to show to EU commitment to improve the state of the environment for current and future generations, to highlight the EU support for the Sustainable Development Goals as a transformation agenda to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development globally and to reiterate the EU commitment to reach a global agreement in Paris (COP21) in December 2015;
- Commissioner Vella met Archbishop Alain Paul Lebeaupin, Apostolic Nuncio to the EU, on 7 December 2015; the meeting focussed on the ‘Laudato Si - On care for our common home’, the second Encyclical of Pope Francis, and to encourage the Vatican to play a role by showing support for Multilateral Environmental Agreements;
- Another meeting between Commissioner Vella and Archbishop Alain Paul Lebeaupin, Apostolic Nuncio to the EU, was held on 17 March 2017; the meeting was an opportunity for the Commissioner to present the latest EU actions to protect the oceans and to convey an invitation to the Pope to the fourth international Our Ocean Conference to be held in Malta on 5 and 6 October 2017.

To be exhaustive, Commissioner Vella received also the following invitations from

- the European Union Office of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints to attend at the VIP reception and the concert of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra to be held on Brussels on 11 July 2016;

-the Archbishop of Constantinople Bartolomew to attend at the Green Attica Symposium
- international ecological symposium to be held in Athens from 5 to 8 June 2018.

Both invitations were declined.

Yours sincerely,



Robert KONRAD
Head of Unit